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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 002511

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NSC FOR SINGH AND WATERS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: AL GHAD PARTY WOES

REF: A. CAIRO 2350

[1](#)B. 2005 CAIRO 8034
[1](#)C. 2005 CAIRO 7325

Classified By: Minister-Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs
William R. Stewart, for reasons 1.4 (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In a potential death-blow to Ayman Nour's Ghad Party, on July 31 Egypt's Political Parties Committee (PPC) ruled that Musa Mustafa Musa, an alleged government-backed rival of Nour's, be named leader of the party. This was the culmination of two years of legal wrangling between Nour's Ghad Party, and the parallel Ghad Party created by Musa following his expulsion from Nour's organization in September 2005. On August 4, Ghad president Ehab El Khouly and Gameela Ismail (one of Ghad's vice-presidents and the wife of Ayman Nour) presented a formal petition to the PPC, appealing the July 31 ruling. The PPC is scheduled to review the appeal on August 20, but observers agree it is highly unlikely that it will rule against Musa. The PPC decision effectively neuters the Ghad Party as an independent opposition organization, consigning it to the already well-populated ranks of Egyptian puppet political parties. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Hours after the July 31 State Council Administrative Court's denial of imprisoned Al Ghad Party leader Ayman Nour's appeal for health-based parole (ref A), the Ghad Party suffered a second blow when the National Democratic Party dominated Political Parties Committee (PPC) ruled that Musa Mustafa Musa be recognized as the legitimate leader of the party. This was the culmination of two years of legal wrangling between Nour's Ghad Party, and the parallel Ghad Party created by Musa following his expulsion from the party in September 2005 (refs B and C). The PPC's decision was a follow-up to a June 28 ruling of the South Cairo Court of First Instance that recognized Musa as the "legal president of Al Ghad," and requested that the PPC therefore provide to Musa the 300,000 LE (approximately 53,000 USD) financial support annually paid to Egyptian political parties (Note: The Nour wing of Ghad asserts that it has not received any financial assistance from the PPC for the last three years. End note).

[1](#)3. (C) The South Cairo Court ruling was reportedly based on the proceedings of an October 2005 general assembly meeting of Musa's parallel Ghad Party, where Musa was elected chairman. The court asserted that the October 2005 assembly was "valid" and its proceedings "lawful." Following the June 28 ruling, Ghad president Ehab El Khouly sent a memo to PPC chairman Safwat El Sherif asking him to contest the court's decision, arguing that Musa was expelled from the Ghad Party a month before calling for the general assembly, and that the assembly was therefore "illegal and illegitimate." El Khouly reportedly never received a reply from El Sherif. (Note: Ref

B details Nour's assessment of the October 2005 meeting ("financed by State Security" and populated by a "rented crowd"), while ref C discusses the initial Musa putsch against Nour, and the opinions of several Embassy contacts that Musa was "firmly under the control of GOE elements." End note).

¶4. (SBU) On August 4, Ehab El Khouly and Gameela Ismail (one of Ghad's vice-presidents and the wife of Ayman Nour) presented a formal petition to the PPC, appealing the July 31 ruling. The PPC is scheduled to review the appeal on August ¶20. Meanwhile, Musa asserted to journalists that such efforts are "desperate moves," and appears confident that he will prevail. Musa reportedly stated that he was originally expelled from the party because of fears that he would expose Ghad's "links with the U.S. administration." He told the Al Ahram Weekly newspaper, "I am sure that in time people will realize the truth, and differentiate between honorable politicians and U.S. agents (an apparent reference to Ismail, El Khouly, and Nour). They will realize who is behind the smear campaign against me."

¶5. (SBU) On August 6, Musa filed a request with the Public Prosecutor (Egypt's attorney general equivalent) asking for approval to take over the Ghad Party's downtown Cairo headquarters (which currently sports a "Free Ayman Nour" banner). Musa reportedly intends to file complaints with the Public Prosecutor against El Khouly and Ismail for being members of an "outlawed organization." Several Egyptian newspapers have reported that Musa announced that a party conference will be held in September, and that, "our party will not criticize any of the ruling party's policies unless we have an alternative to present. We will not enter into political blocs or fronts that do not correspond with the party's objectives, and we have no problem with coordinating

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with the government, as the ruling party is not the enemy."

¶6. (C) Since July 31, poloff has repeatedly attempted to contact Ismail, who has not responded to any of the numerous phone calls and text messages. El Khouly told poloff that he would prefer not to meet now, implying that such a meeting is too sensitive given the current state of affairs. On August 12, poloff met with Ghad vice-president Wael Nawara, who termed Ghad as "dead" and "effectively eviscerated by the government." Nawara was not at all optimistic about efforts to appeal the PPC's ruling, assessing that, "the government took a decision (after the 2005 presidential elections) to destroy Ayman Nour's Ghad Party, and they have been successful." Nawara noted that in the past month, he has been pushed by some Ghad supporters to start a new party, but that, "I simply do not have the energy to do so, nor the hope that the government would be any more open to allowing a new party to operate." Nawara mused that he has invested in Al Ghad for four years, "at great personal cost to my family and my professional life. And there is nothing to show for it."

¶7. (SBU) From prison, Nour has reportedly called for his supporters to form a new political movement called the "Free Alternative," that would be, "twinning with the Ghad Party The two will work together to free society from corruption, oppression, and despotism." However, there seems to be little appetite among Ghad members to embark on forming such a new movement. Ghad president El Khouly told reporters that Nour's suggestion has been rejected by members of the party's higher committee, who prefer to concentrate their efforts on winning back control of the Ghad Party.

¶8. (SBU) On August 12, independent newspaper Al Masry Al Yom quoted Abdel Halim Qandeel, one of leaders of the Egyptian political movement "Kefaya" (Enough), as saying that Kefaya will not recognize the PPC decision or Musa's Ghad Party, and that, "Kefaya does not know any Ghad Party other than that headed by Ehab El Khouly." Musa has been roundly criticized in Egypt's independent press, with an editorialist from Al

Masry Al Yom characterizing him as "the Judas of the Ghad Party."

19. (C) Comment: The Political Parties Committee's decision effectively neuters the Ghad Party as an independent opposition organization, consigning it to the already well-populated ranks of Egyptian puppet political parties. We do not anticipate that the appeal of the Nour branch of Ghad to the PPC will be successful. Rather, the outlook is grim for Gameela Ismail, Ehab El Khouly, and their supporters, who could plausibly face legal action if they continue to operate in the name of the Ghad Party, in the face of Musa's now legal control of the organization.
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